

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Remarks in an Exchange With Reporters in Morrisville, North Carolina
March 28, 2023

Shooting in Nashville, Tennessee

Q. Mr. President, come talk to us about guns.

Q. Mr. President, have you spoken to any of the families of those who lost loved ones in Nashville?

The President. No, I'm working on that now.

Q. Have you spoken to the police chief, sir? Can you tell us about those conversations?

The President. I spoke to the police chief. I spoke to the two officers that went in and saved the lives. I've spoken to everyone but the families, and I haven't done that yet.

Israel/Judicial Reform

Q. Can we ask about Israel? How concerned are you about the health of democracy there in Israel?

The President. Like many strong supporters of Israel, I'm very concerned. And I'm concerned that they get this straight. They cannot continue down this road.

And I've sort of made that clear. I—hopeful—hopefully, the Prime Minister will act in a way that he is going to try to work out some genuine compromise. But that remains to be seen.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel

Q. Are you inviting Prime Minister Netanyahu to the White House, sir? Do you believe he'll be coming to Washington?

The President. Not in the near term.

Q. Did you speak to him on the phone? Did you speak to him on the phone in the middle of all this?

The President. No, I did not. I delivered a message through our Ambassador.

Speaker of the House of Representatives Kevin O. McCarthy/Federal Budget

Q. Will you meet with Speaker McCarthy on the—will you speak—meet with Speaker McCarthy if he doesn't put a budget out?

The President. I don't know what we're going to meet on. But I'm—

Q. He outlined some points today.

The President. The deal was we each put down our budget.

U.S. Banking System

Q. On the banking crisis, are you—what is your thought about how much you can get accomplished in terms of regulatory reform in Congress? And how much can you do executively through power?

The President. Well, I think we've done what we need to do executively. I feel confident things are settling out. The markets seem to be responding. And so—but I'm not sure whether we get much legislative change. But we're looking at that as well.

Northern Ireland

Q. Northern Ireland—a question on Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland has increased its terrorism threat level to "severe." How concerned are you about that? And will it impact your plans to visit?

The President. No, they can't keep me out.

Migration

Q. You mentioned in Canada last week that you were concerned about a further deterioration, indicating what would happen with diaspora throughout the hemisphere. What is your specific concern? What are you afraid is going to happen?

The President. Loss of life among people who are being negatively impacted by the gangs, number one.

Number two, people get hurt in mass migrations. And I worry about that as well.

Gun Control Legislation

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us anything more about your conversation with Senator Hagerty, when it comes to any action potentially on gun violence prevention legislation?

The President. There's nothing really to tell. I expressed my concern and asked if there was anything I could do to be of help.

And I understand from some folks he's a fairly reasonable guy, and I hope something comes of it.

U.S. Banking System

Q. On banking then—just to go back to banking, you don't anticipate doing anything more, sort of, unilaterally from the executive side of things?

The President. No, it's not over yet. We're watching it very closely. I think my team has handled it very well so far. And rather than get ahead of myself here, I think let's let things move the way they are.

Gun Control Legislation

Q. On the gun—on the gun issue, Mr. President, you've continued to call for an assault weapon ban. It's—it's——

The President. It's called exposure. Exposure.

You know, when people say: "Why do you keep doing it? It's not going to happen." Expose those people who refuse to do something. So I'm going to keep calling it out, remind people that they're not acting. They should act.

I mean, think about this. I mean, you know, people are beginning to see—they have on television now these emergency room doctors showing what happens when a bullet enters a body when it's from a revolver or from another gun. It goes in a straight line and goes out.

But what happens now with that assault weapon—with an AR-15—it goes in the body, and it explodes in the body, and it goes in at a significantly higher speed.

So, in every way, it's just—I mean, as I said when I got the first bill passed, I confronted some hunters and fishermen in Delaware when I was walking through the areas in southern Delaware, pushing this. And I said, "How many deer are wearing a Kevlar vest, you know?"

I mean, really—I mean, just think about it. You can't own a machinegun. Well, the idea you can't lock this up? Give me a break. You can't own a bazooka. You can't—I mean, it just—I mean, there's nothing absolute about any amendment. And this is ridiculous.

And it's all about money—big, big, big money.

Shooting in Nashville, Tennessee

Q. Are you planning to visit Nashville, sir, in the aftermath of this tragedy?

The President. Well, that's underway now. We're trying to figure that out—is what helps the most.

Tornadoes in Mississippi

Q. And are you planning to visit Mississippi, sir, in the—for the tornado aftermath?

The President. Yes.

Q. Yes?

Federal Reserve System

Q. On the banking thing, does it change your thinking about who needs to go into that vice chair job at the Fed?

You know, Sarah Bloom Raskin and Saule Omarova had to withdraw their nominations. They were tough on regulation. Is this job even more important—the Vice Chair nomination—now?

The President. Well, it's been important from the beginning. That's why I appointed them—or tried to appoint them.

Q. But for the Vice Chair—for the Fed—to replace——

The President. We're talking about it. No, I know.

And—but that's underway right now. Guys, we've got to get going.

Israel

Q. On Israel, just one follow. On those who say that America shouldn't be involved in domestic politics and shouldn't be interfering, how do you respond to that with——

The President. We don't want to interfere. It's a little bit like if all the things—things are exploding in America. What do you think would happen if, all of a sudden—well, I know—I'm not going to even speculate. Anyway, we're not interfering. They know my position. They know America's position. They know the American Jewish position, the—anyway.

Q. Do you believe that Prime Minister Netanyahu is going to go ahead with the judicial overhaul?

White House aide. Thank you.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:13 p.m. on the tarmac at Raleigh-Durham International Airport prior to boarding Air Force One en route to Washington, DC. In his remarks, he referred to Chief

of Police John Drake and Ofcs. Michael Collazo and Rex Engelbert of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County; U.S. Ambassador to Israel Thomas R. Nides; and Sen. William F. Hagerty IV. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, Morrisville, NC.

Locations: Morrisville, NC.

Names: Collazo, Michael; Drake, John; Engelbert, Rex; Hagerty, William F., IV; McCarthy, Kevin O.; Netahnyahu, Benjamin; Nides, Thomas R.; Omarova, Saule T.; Raskin, Sarah Bloom.

Subjects: Banks and financial institutions, mismanagement and failures; Banks and financial intuitions, Federal oversight and receivership; Federal Reserve System; Fiscal year 2024 budget proposal; Gun control efforts; Gun violence, prevention efforts; Israel, political situation; Israel, Prime Minister; Israel, U.S. Ambassador; Mississippi, tornado damage and recovery efforts; North Carolina, President's visits; Refugees and global migrants, humanitarian situation; Speaker of the House of Representatives; Tennessee, shooting in Nashville; United Kingdom, security situation in Northern Ireland.

DCPD Number: DCPD202300239.